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Archives show: Nelson Mandela received weapons training from the Mossad

Ofer Aderet

Nelson **Mandela**, the former South African leader who died earlier this month, **was trained in weaponry and sabotage by Mossad operatives in 1962, a few months before he was arrested in South Africa.** During his training, **Mandela expressed interest in the methods of the Haganah pre-state underground and was viewed by the Mossad as leaning to-**

ward communism.

These revelations are from a document in the Israel State Archives labeled "top secret." The existence of the document is revealed here for the first time.

It also emerges that the Mossad operatives attempted to encourage Zionist sympathies in Mandela.

Mandela, the father of the new South Africa and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, led the

struggle against apartheid in his country from the 1950s. He was arrested, tried and released several times before going underground in the early 1960s. In January 1962, he secretly and illegally fled South Africa and visited various African countries, including Ethiopia, Algeria, Egypt and Ghana. **His goal was to meet with leaders of African countries and garner financial and military support for the mili-**

tary wing of the underground African National Congress.

A letter sent from the Mossad to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem reveals that **Mandela underwent military training by Mossad operatives in Ethiopia during this period.** These operatives were unaware of Mandela's true identity. The letter, classified top secret, was dated October 11, 1962 – about two months after Mandela was arrested in

South Africa, shortly after his return to the country.

The Mossad sent the letter to three recipients: the head of the Africa Desk in the Foreign Ministry, Netanel Lorch, who went on to become the third Knesset secretary; Maj. Gen. Aharon Remez, head of the ministry's department of international cooperation and the first Israel Air Force Commander-in-Chief; and Shmuel Dibon, Israel's ambas-

sador to Addis Ababa between 1962 and 1966 and former head of the Middle East desk at the ministry.

The subject line of the letter was "the Black Pimpernel" in English, the term the South African media was already using for Mandela. It was based on the Scarlet Pimpernel, the nom de guerre of the hero of Baroness Emma Orczy's early 20th century novel, who saved French noblemen from the

guillotine during the French Revolution.

"As you may recall, three months ago we discussed the case of a trainee who arrived at the [Israeli] embassy in Ethiopia by the name of David Mobsari who came from Rhodesia," the letter said. "The aforementioned received training from the Ethiopians [Israeli embassy staff, almost certainly Mossad agents] in judo, sabotage and weaponry."

The phrase "the Ethiopians" was apparently a code name for Mossad operatives working in Ethiopia.

The letter also noted that **the subject in question "showed an interest in the methods of the Hagannah and other Israeli underground movements."**

It added that "he greeted our men with 'Shalom', was familiar with the problems of Jewry

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Former chairman of top bank gets jail in fraud case

Yasmin Gueta

Former Bank Hapoalim chairman Danny Dankner was sentenced yesterday to a year in prison after pleading guilty to reduced charges relating to misconduct during his time at the bank.

Dankner was also given a fine of 1 million shekels (\$285,000) and a one-year suspended sentence, following a plea bargain with the Tel Aviv District Court.

As part of the plea bargain, Dankner admitted to several counts of fraud, corporate breach of trust, receipt of property through subterfuge and breach of banking governance standards.

Prosecutors had sought an 18-month prison sentence, along with a suspended sentence and a million shekel fine. Dankner's defense had asked the court to suffice with a fine.

"Dankner committed his acts of breach of trust as chairman of the board of Bank Hapoalim – one of the most important jobs in the Israeli economy and one of the most influential," said prosecutor Maor Even-Hen in court. He added that every one of the acts Dankner admitted to showed he used his position to advance his personal interests through his work at the bank.

During the court session, Dankner apologized for his actions and expressed deep regret over the affair, saying he has been taking responsibility for the actions listed in the amended indictment reached through the plea bargain.

At the same time, he said the stricken charges of money laundering, receipt of property through fraud and bribery had always been baseless.

During his court appearances, Dankner usually dressed simply in a button-down, open-collared white shirt and black trousers, accompanied by a battery of lawyers. As he sat on the defendant's bench, he would occasionally make a note on the papers folded in front of him, but most of the time he looked down at the floor, studied the witness in front of him, or sent looks to his attorneys.

Dankner's attorneys claimed during the entire proceedings that their client had committed no crime. "This man was not born a banker, he was born a farmer," attorney Navot Tel Zur told the court, adding that although his client's conduct not been "attractive, it was not criminal."

However, the day Dankner was to have taken the stand himself to be cross-examined

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Police confronting migrants marching toward Be'er Sheva yesterday.

Eliyahu Hershkovitz

Police arrest migrants marching to protest friends' detentions

Ilan Lior

More than 100 illegal migrants from Africa left the Holot open detention facility in the Negev yesterday afternoon and started marching toward Be'er Sheva.

Immigration Authority officers arrested dozens of the marchers near the facility and forced them to board buses to return. Dozens of other migrants sprinted into the desert, and sending officers chasing after them.

The migrants set out on the solidarity march three days after hundreds of other detainees refused to return to the open center as required on

Monday, marching instead toward Jerusalem to protest the government's detention policy. The migrants were forcibly boarded onto buses and returned to the detention facility.

One of the migrants who left the facility yesterday with the goal of reaching Tel Aviv told Haaretz that he and his friends came to Israel seeking refuge, not detention, and would rather be in the hands of an international refugee agency if not free to work in Israel.

"Our stance is clear," said the migrant, Mohammed, who arrived from Sudan via the Sinai Peninsula. "Either grant us asylum or give us to an international refugee agency."

Starting in the morning, the migrants left Holot in small groups, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the Israel Prisons Service officers in charge of the facility, and gathered at a nearby bus stop, before beginning their march to Be'er Sheva. A few of them tied their hands or held them crossed as an act of solidarity with their arrested friends.

The recent amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law, passed by the Knesset last week, allows the migrants to leave the facility between 6 A.M. and 10 P.M., but they are required to sign in three times

See MARCH, Page A2

Child conversion could become political hot potato

Yair Ettinger

When Hagit Bartov sat before the three rabbinical court judges hearing her case, she had already decided that, if the court persisted in demanding that she send her son to a religious preschool as a prerequisite for completing his conversion, she would refuse.

Bartov, who was raised in a religious kibbutz and defines herself as "modern religious", is raising her son 22-month-old son Hillel alone, since adopting him from a Russian orphanage about six months ago. When the time came for preschool, she sent him to the public preschool in the southern moshav in which they live, without even considering the Shas alternative. But when she decided to have him circumcised and converted, it was clear to her it would be according to Jewish law.

The rabbinic judges, however, in keeping with Chief Rabbinate policy, told her that transferring the child to an Orthodox preschool was a condition of his conversion. Bartov refused, saying it conflicted with her worldview. She then made an appointment with the Conservative Movement rabbinic court to have Hillel converted according to Jewish law. At the last minute, however, she decided to give the Orthodox court, another chance.

"I don't really understand the logic, either in terms of Jewish law or humanity, of your choice to require me to move him to a preschool that goes against my worldview,"

Bartov told the judges. "This child came to me as a miracle. I couldn't give birth. I wanted to, and if had given birth to a child, I would have sent him to that same school. That didn't work out and God gave me a better miracle... and he is mine. He is the son of a Jewish mother. How can you tell me what to do and doubt his Judaism? He is the son of a Jewish mother! Forgive me but I don't understand. I think it's cruel!"

Bartov sensed that the judges were unexpectedly softening. Two of them shed a tear, she said. One judge,

Justices stay circumcision ruling

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who turned out to be Rabbi Israel Weiss, the former military chief rabbi, said, after Bartov told them that the Shas school did not suit her, "me neither."

After a brief consultation they told her they had decided to allow the child to be immersed in the ritual bath, the mikveh, as a Jew. "We have heard your cry," they said.

Yesterday, at the Be'er Sheva mikveh, Hillel Bartov was immersed and completed his conversion.

This story is of course the exception to the rule. In principle, adoptive parents who refuse to send their child to a

See CHILD, Page A5

Salam starts in school, coexistence program shows

Or Kashti

Surveys of fifth-grade attitudes to Arabs in 2010 and 2012 revealed growing anti-Arab extremism in the student body. The exception to that trend were students who participated in the Ya Salam program, in which students are taught spoken Arabic at school.

Increasing extremism among school-age children is due to the "continued deterioration in Jewish-Arab relations in Israel in recent years, which causes hate, fear and separatism," according to a report by the Henrietta Szold Institute in Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Arabic studies program "succeeded to a great extent in preventing the negative influence of anti-Arab opinion on the participants in the program."

The Abraham Fund Initiatives, which is behind Ya Salam, is campaigning to have it taught throughout the country. But the Education Ministry has yet to make a decision on the matter, despite previous promises to do so.

Education Ministry rules make Arabic a mandatory subject in junior high school, with three hours of class a week. But, as with much else in the education system, there is a large gap between directives and their implementation. Latest figures show that only some 100,000 seventh- and eighth-grade students in Jewish schools study Arabic – about half of the number that should be learning the language, according to Ministry directives.

Schools are also required to teach Arabic in tenth-grade, but only 10 percent of students actually study it. Two years ago, only 3,671 Jewish students took the Arabic matriculation exam.

The Ya Salam curriculum for fifth- and sixth-grades is intended to be the beginning of continued Arabic studies in junior high school (which in Israel starts in seventh grade.) The curriculum, which was developed by the Abraham Fund in cooperation with the ministry, was rolled out in 15 schools in Carmiel and Haifa in 2005.

Today, it is taught in some 200 schools across the country with 23,000 students. The program is mandatory in Haifa and the ministry's entire northern region and is also taught in a few dozen schools in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the south. About 100 teachers teach the program, the great majority of whom are Arabs. For most of the students, it is their first meeting with an Arab under equal conditions.

The Szold Institute report,

See SCHOOL, Page A5

Fleeing bad economy, French Jews flock to Israel



French high school seniors participating in a Bac Bleu Blanc ("Blue White Seniors") event.

JAFI

Judy Maltz

Barely a few hours into her weeklong trip, Noemi Kahloon has already made up her mind: On her next visit to Israel, she says, the one she plans to take after high school, she'll be coming on a one-way ticket.

The 12th grade French high school student has lots of family in Israel, scattered in places like Netanya, Ashdod and Dimona, which is why she's not worried about immigrating on her own. Besides, she's sure that once she comes, the rest of the family will follow. "It'll be just the push my mom and dad need," she says.

The same goes for Hilary Soria, her classmate at the ORT school in Villiers-le-Bel, located just outside Paris. Soria, too, is determined to make a go of life in Israel, but may

wait a bit longer – until she's completed her studies at university. "For me, one of the main reasons to come is that I have my grandparents, aunt and cousins here, and I miss them all a lot."

The two girls are among 1,000 French high school students participating this week in a program known as Bac Bleu Blanc ("Blue White Seniors"). Over the past 10 years, this Jewish Agency-sponsored program has brought more than 8,500 French teenagers to Israel during their winter break for a whirlwind tour of the country. All in their final year of high school, the students come from 25 different Jewish schools, along with a few public schools, from all over France.

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